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TAGS: PREL PGOV UNSC MA

SUBJECT: MADAGASCAR PERMREP'S CALL ON AMBASSADOR RICE

Classified By: Amb. Susan Rice, for reasons 1.4 b/d.

¶1. (C) Ambassador Zina Andrianarivelo-Razafy of Madagascar paid an introductory call on Ambassador Rice on February 19. He offered no details on the ongoing political crisis in Madagascar but expressed a general hope that parties to the dispute could reach a compromise solution that "respected legality." He repeatedly emphasized his commitment to good relations with the United States, making clear that Madagascar would be absent during any vote on a resolution condemning the ICC's actions in Sudan, just as it absented itself from votes on various General Assembly resolutions condemning Israel.

¶2. (C) In response to a question from Ambassador Rice on strengthening relations with the Africa Group, Ambassador Andrianarivelo invited Amb. Rice to brief the Africa Group, suggesting that a March meeting could provide an opportunity in particular for a frank exchange of views on the ICC proceedings against Sudanese President Bashir.

¶3. (C) Comment: Andrianarivelo does not strike us as a player in Malagasy politics: his chief concern in the current political dispute seems to be retaining his job. His pro-American leanings may allow us to cultivate an African ally on General Assembly issues, particularly if events at home leave him with increased leeway on important votes. End comment.

Rice